

## Maria Viegas

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**From:** Russell Keith  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 February 2012 8:12 AM  
**To:** Julia Knight; Lauren Copley; Maria Viegas  
**Subject:** FW: LATERAL VIOLENCE LEADS TO DEATH OF 10 YEAR OLD GIRL

**Importance:** High

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Brian Butler [mailto:Brian.Butler@nationalcongress.com.au]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 January 2012 11:55 PM  
**Subject:** LATERAL VIOLENCE LEADS TO DEATH OF 10 YEAR OLD GIRL  
**Importance:** High

LATERAL VIOLENCE - PART 2

Due to the recent death of a 10 year old girl who was subjected to ongoing Lateral violence, I would like to remind you all of the purpose in tackling this difficult issue - we need to 'acknowledge', 'understand' and 'address' Lateral violence at every single level within our society if we hope to have any chance of halting youth suicide dead in its tracks in this country.

Please read with an open mind and an open heart and share with as many people as you can with the aim to starting up Yarning Circles within your own Communities.

Lateral violence is an extremely personal and confronting topic, every individual will have different feelings about it and there is no room for malice in this very important debate. We must all come together and share our information whilst trying not to react on a personal level. Very difficult I know considering I just mentioned the seriously personal nature involved in dealing with Lateral violence. The difficulty comes not only for each of us as individuals and attempting to manage our personal feelings and responses, but also with the family, friends and colleagues that we choose to share it with, and the difficult conversations that this topic will bring to the fore. It WILL require strength and courage for us to deal with these issues and conversations, but I have faith that each and every one of you will push yourselves beyond your everyday limits for the sake of our children and the generations yet to come.

Some of the feelings we can expect to be exposed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Anger
- Disappointment
- Fear
- Grief
- Guilt
- Isolation
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Relief
- Sadness
- Shame
- Threatened and Defensive

One thing I know for certain is that we will all have a different reaction, view and perspective which will need to be respected and nurtured along the way.

We will never all be ready to deal with the layer upon layer of trans-generational trauma, pain and suffering and most certainly not in the same space and time, BUT, the one thing we can do together is have the strength to leading by example with

conviction, start the awkward conversations and force ourselves to share information regardless of ego or personal gain. Share with each other and bring back to life that lore that gave us our beautiful ways, our caring and sharing.

Lateral violence happens to all people, within all cultures across the world, but the type of Lateral violence I am talking about here relates specifically to Aboriginal and Islander people in this country. As a people we need a collective healing and we need it to come from within our own families and communities. In no way does this conversation take away the pain and suffering from any other culture or their experiences as this too is a form of Lateral violence.

I have chosen to utilise modern technology to share this information as widely as possible and in doing so have found it necessary to address some social networking issues as they link directly to Lateral violence.

Social networking is a wonderful tool that we can use to connect and indeed, reconnect with many people as distance is no longer a barrier. The lack of verbal and non-verbal cues that are lost in this form of communication does however run the risk of causing additional distress to users.

We all need to remember this when reading and posting on threads and other pages. What we share in cyberspace is there forever! How it translates to the receiver may not be how it sounded in the senders head. When we become threatening or abusive online, this is a form of Lateral violence and can very quickly escalate to cyber bullying.

The important thing to remember here is that when you read something disrespectful and negative about yourself, it leaves an imprint on your mind and reinforces itself into your subconscious much longer than that which is spoken verbally in the heat of debate. You can unfortunately read and re-read that negative perpetration again and again which can cause disastrous ramifications in my opinion, and as we have all seen in the media, can also lead youth to suicide.

The reason we need to understand the true meaning of Lateral violence is this; our children need to move beyond the survival mechanisms that we, the older generations, needed for us to survive. This survival instinct served us well and allowed you and I to be here, and yes we did survive. Our children need us to come together and give them a strong base of solidarity and culture to help them to grow and shape their way into the future; a solid base that is free from the binds of Lateral violence and oppression.

Again the wisdom of Cheri Yavu Kama Harathunian explains Lateral violence in a way that resonates with me and expresses the true meaning that I am speaking of throughout this series of papers, "This 'yellow snake', this lateral violence has been curled up in our peoples living moments for three centuries, because it sinuously crawled amongst our peoples for over the last 300 years. We were not only forced to suffer the invasion of 1788. We have been carrying that suffering with us all of this time and our ancestors learned very well and copied the violence that was perpetrated against them and used what they learned to ensure that with violence they would individually survive"... "Even in our survival techniques there was violence, because peoples had to go up against each other, go up against their loved ones, anyone that they saw who was a threat to their own survival. We learned to turn our faces away from each other, and began to wear 'Big Shame' in our waking and sleeping hours. We learned to be 'takers' not 'givers' and then the government blest us with welfare and for years we did not realise it but our minds were being conditioned to accept that this was our lot and we developed and then suffered from and some of us still suffer from a welfare mentality. We learned that it was okay to hit, stamp on, fight with, brutalise, torment each other just to get on, and become like the invaders because they were getting a better deal out of life"... "We were taught by religion that "White was right and black was evil"... and we learned to hate ourselves, our culture, our languages, and our own God given ways of being who we are; First Nations peoples with many nation names. Political violence forced our ancestors to become slaves, victims and perpetrators of the violence that seemed to work and help the invaders get on and become something. We turned into each other, and began to practice the violence that we saw and here we are today. But it is our young, our beautiful young ones who now openly manifest this insidious thing that takes them to that place where they feel so hopeless and helpless. They go to that bleak place where for them the only solution to their pain is to take control of their own choice to take their most precious gift - life - and they choose to go to sleep forever to ease their suffering and their pain and their disconnection from themselves, their family, their people, their culture, and their sacred lands. They haven't even lived! That 'yellow snake' that Lateral violence has to be addressed". Cheri Yavu Kama Harathunian 2012

We need to go beyond the surface of what we know, beyond the reactionary world we have come to live by that has done its darnedest to numb our spiritual souls for over 300 years. Knowing Lateral violence, and that it has underpinned our existence, is the first step to healing for each and every one of us. I commend you all for being open and taking the time to read about this important subject. No matter how painful it is, things can only improve through our understanding and support of one another.

SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE YOU KNOW, LEAVE IT IN THE LUNCH ROOM AT WORK, THE RECEPTION ROOM AT THE DOCTORS, THE BUS SHELTER, FORWARD IT, COPY AND PASTE IT, PRINT IT OUT AND TAKE IT HOME TO ALL YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO DO NOT HAVE COMPUTERS, SHARE THE INFORMATION, RAISE AWARENESS AND HEAL OUR SPIRITS!

FOR OUR OWN HEALING AND FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN!

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31 January 2012

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